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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Lord, You are our light and salvation, so why should we be afraid? Each day, You provide us with blessings for which we give thanks.

Thank You for the beauty of the Earth and the glory of the skies. Thank You for bringing order out of chaos. Thank You for marriage and family, for homes built upon our trust in You. Thank You for children's laughter and for the roar of the ocean. Thank You for Your love and for the true and free gift of Your salvation. Thank You for Senators and staffers who faithfully labor to keep our Nation strong.

Lord, deliver us from those things that dishonor You. Free us from provincialism, narrowness, and from a shallow tolerance that lacks a studied conviction. Liberate us also from poverty of thought and spirit. We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SAM BROWNBACK led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 27, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BROWNBACK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader from the great State of Tennessee is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning, following our leader time, we will have up to 2 hours of morning business. That time will be divided with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes, the minority controlling the next 60 minutes, and the last 30 minutes under the control of this side of the aisle. Following that time we will resume consideration of the highway bill. Yesterday, we began the amendment process on the highway legislation, and we will continue working through amendments today and over the course of this week. I do expect rollcall votes today on amendments, and we should have a full day of debate on the highway bill.

I do want to take this opportunity to remind my colleagues that we in all likelihood will be considering conference reports this week, as they are made available. One of those will be the budget conference report, which will be debated for up to a 10-hour statutory limit. I hope when we do come to the budget we not find it necessary to use all that time, but Senators should stay on notice that we will complete that very important conference report before we leave for our recess.

Finally, I should also mention there are a number of nominations—actually two specific nominations—that will be completed before adjourning. We are working back and forth across the aisle to see how we can best complete those two nominations. We have three district judges as well that should be voted unanimously. The two nominations that I referred to—one is the Portman nomination, which came out of committee, to be U.S. Trade Representative, and the other is Stephen Johnson, to be Administrator of EPA. Again, we are working on bringing that to conclusion, but we need to complete both of those before we leave. Both of these are Cabinet rank officials, and we should not—will not—adjourn until we have considered these important nominations as well.

Mr. President, I have a brief statement on the bill.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate voted overwhelmingly to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the highway bill, the highway bill we are now on. The amendment process has begun. It enjoys strong bipartisan support, and I am encouraged by the bipartisan commitment to both go to the bill and move this important bill forward. Time is of essence. The current highway extension from last year expires at the end of next month, on May 31. We are going to have to work together to pass this legislation, then take the bill that we pass to conference to join it with the House bill—I have a feeling there will have to be fairly extensive negotiations at that point—and then send that bill to the President for his signature.

This highway bill that is currently on the floor is a product of a long bipartisan process. It is based on more than 3 years of hard work, over a dozen hearings, testimony from more than 100 witnesses, countless hours of negotiation, all of it supported by a deep

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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